

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 1-12 and 15.

Claims 1-12 cancelled.

13. (Currently amended) ~~A coating according to claim 1~~ The gasket assembly of claim 16, characterized in that the coating has a density of below 70% of the theoretical density of the material forming the coating.

Claims 14-15 cancelled.

16. (New) A gasket assembly having a gasket coating comprising:  
chemically exfoliated vermiculite wherein at least 90 weight percent of the vermiculite has a thickness of less than or equal to 30 microns and no dimension is greater than 1 millimeter;  
a high temperature organic resin that is heat resistant to at least 300 degrees Celsius;  
a supplementary inorganic resin; and  
a flaky filler.

17. (New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 wherein the exfoliated vermiculite is present in an amount from 10 to 90 percent by weight of the coating.

18. (New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 wherein the high temperature organic resin is a silicone or siliconate resin.

19.(New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 wherein the high temperature organic resin is present in an amount of from 10 to 50 percent by weight of the coating.

20.(New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 wherein the supplementary inorganic resin is lithium silicate.

21.(New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 wherein the flaky filler is mica, milled thermally exfoliated vermiculite, aluminum flake, or a mixture thereof.

22.(New) The gasket assembly of claim 16, wherein the amount by weight percent of the high temperature organic resin is greater than the amount by weight percent of the chemically exfoliated vermiculite in the coating.

23. (New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 wherein the coating has a thickness of less than 100 microns.

24. (New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 wherein the coating has a thickness of less than 80 microns.

25. (New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 wherein the coating has a thickness of from 50 to 75 microns.

26. (New) The gasket assembly of claim 16 further comprising a solid lubricant.

27. (New) A seal-enhancing coating for a gasket comprising a mixture of:

chemically exfoliated vermiculite wherein at least 90 weight percent of the vermiculite has a thickness of less than or equal to 30 microns and no dimension is greater than 1 millimeter;

a high temperature organic resin that is heat resistant to at least 300 degrees Celsius;

a supplementary inorganic resin; and

a flaky filler.

28. (New) The coating of claim 27 wherein the exfoliated vermiculite is present in an amount from 10 to 90 percent by weight of the coating.

29. (New) The coating of claim 27 wherein the high temperature organic resin is a silicone or silicate resin.

30. (New) The coating of claim 27 wherein the high temperature organic resin is present in an amount of from 10 to 50 percent by weight of the coating.

31. (New) The coating of claim 27 wherein the supplementary inorganic resin is lithium silicate.

32. (New) The coating of claim 27 wherein the flaky filler is mica, milled thermally exfoliated vermiculite, aluminum flake, or a mixture thereof.

33. (New) The coating of claim 27, wherein the amount by weight percent of the high temperature organic resin is greater than the amount by weight percent of the chemically exfoliated vermiculite in the coating.

34. (New) The coating of claim 27 further comprising a solid lubricant.